

This comment is in response to the request from CSREES-2008-0004 for stakeholder input/comment on the establishment and organization of NIFA.

The US Pork Center of Excellence was established in 2005 for the expressed purpose of bringing about national collaboration in research, teaching and extension for the benefit of pork producers nationwide. The original seed money to start the organization came from USDA/CSREES, USDA/ARS, and the National Pork Board. Since then, 28 land grant universities and 18 state pork associations have also become funding partners in the organization. We have submitted several grant requests to USDA/CSREES and have been successful on a couple of them. The opportunities to conduct integrated work through the NRI fit perfectly with our organization's mission which does everything in an integrated manner.

Therefore, we are very interested in the organization of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). We understand that a competitive program is still envisioned for the Institute but that the organization of said program is still under question. Our experience with the current grants team at CSREES has been positive and the individuals in charge have been very forthcoming in explaining their programs and advising on the "fit" of proposed concepts. Experienced grant management units are clearly necessary to maintain the actual and perceived integrity and quality of the NIFA-AFRI sponsored research conducted at various universities and institutes on agriculturally important issues. We would encourage development of a structure which would have expert program managers on each of the critical issue areas with enough funding support to host an impactful program in those areas. We concur with the comments from NASULGC that suggest some logical breakdown in these key areas as follows:

- ⌚ ***Families, Youth, and Community Development***
- ⌚ ***Natural Resources and Environment***
- ⌚ ***Plant Health and Production***
- ⌚ ***Food Safety, Nutrition, and Health***
- ⌚ ***Animal Health and Production***
- ⌚ ***Agricultural Systems and Technology***
- ⌚ ***Agricultural Economics***

The intent of Congress was to heighten the level of the Institute. The intent is not just a name change but it represents a real opportunity to bring agricultural research on a level with NIH. Therefore, we concur with the idea of a Chief Scientist and think that this

person should be integrally involved in the planning and development of the structure of this new organization.

One of the major efforts of the USPCE is in the area of human capital. We have several programs in the area of education and training. Therefore, we think that a well-funded, high quality competitive grants program will be of great benefit as we look to train future scientists, teachers, and extension workers in this country.

Thanks for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J. Meisinger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "D" and "M".

Dr. David J. Meisinger
Executive Director